European Commission

What's inside

Country Profile
Highlights
Strategy
Legal Framework
Actors
Infrastructure
Services for Citizens
Services for Businesses

eGovernment in Ireland

ISA²

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This document is meant to present an overview of the eGoverment status in this country and not to be exhaustive in its references and analysis. Even though every possible care has been taken by the authors to refer to and use valid data from authentic sources, the European Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the included information, nor does it accept any responsibility for any use thereof.

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Country Profile 2

eGovernment Highlights 8

eGovernment Strategy 10

eGovernment Legal Framework 14

eGovernment Actors 19

eGovernment Infrastructure 22

eGovernment Services for Citizens 28

eGovernment Services for Businesses 35

Country Profile

Basic data and indicators

Basic Data

Population (1 000): 4,774,833 inhabitants (2017)

GDP at market prices: 296,151.8 million Euros (2017)

GDP per inhabitant in PPS (Purchasing Power Standard EU 28 = 100): 183 (2016)

GDP growth rate: 7.8% (2017)

Inflation rate: 0.3% (2017)

Unemployment rate: 6.7% (2017)

General government gross debt (Percentage of GDP): 68.0% (2017)

General government deficit/surplus (Percentage of GDP): -0.3% (2017)

Area: 69,797 km^2

Capital city: Dublin

Official EU language: Irish (Gaeilge), English

Currency: EUR

Source: Eurostat (last update: 12 February 2018)

Political Structure

Ireland is a **parliamentary republic**. The Parliament (*Oireachtas*) consists of two Houses: *Dáil Éireann* (the Lower House, 158 elected members (reduced from 166 at the election that took place on 26 February 2016) and *Seanad Éireann* (the Senate, 60 members). The *Seanad* members are broken down as follows: 11 nominated by the Prime Minister (*Taoiseach*); 43 elected by five panels representing vocational interests, namely Culture and Education, Agriculture, Labour, Industry and Commerce, and Public Administration; and 6 elected by the graduates of two universities - three each - by the National University of Ireland and the University of Dublin (Trinity College).

The Head of State is the President of Ireland, elected directly by the people for a seven-year term renewable once. The formal powers and functions of the President are prescribed in the Constitution; the President, who does not have an executive or policy role, exercises them on the advice of the Government. Executive power is exercised by the Government, led by a Prime Minister (Taoiseach) who is appointed by the President upon the recommendation of the Lower House.

There are 31 local authorities with a total of 949 members known as councillors: 26 county councils, which are responsible for local government in 24 geographical counties including the county of Dublin (Dublin county has 3 county councils); 2 city and county councils; and 3 city councils. The council has jurisdiction or control throughout its administrative area. Each council administrative area, apart from the 3 Dublin county councils and the 3 city councils, has a system of municipal districts based on electoral areas. There are in total 95 municipal districts, integrating town and county governance.

The Constitution of Ireland was approved by the people in 1937; subsequent amendments have always been submitted to a referendum, with the most recent one taking place on 22 May 2015.

Ireland became a member of the European Union on 1 January 1973.

Head of State: President Michael D. Higgins (since 11 November 2011).

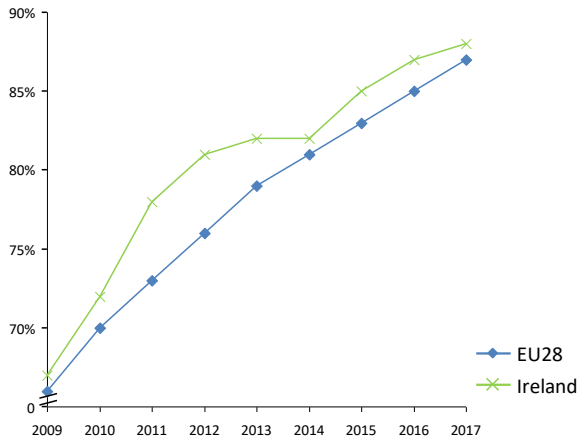
Head of Government: Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Leo Varadkar (since 14 June 2017).

Information Society Indicators

Generic Indicators

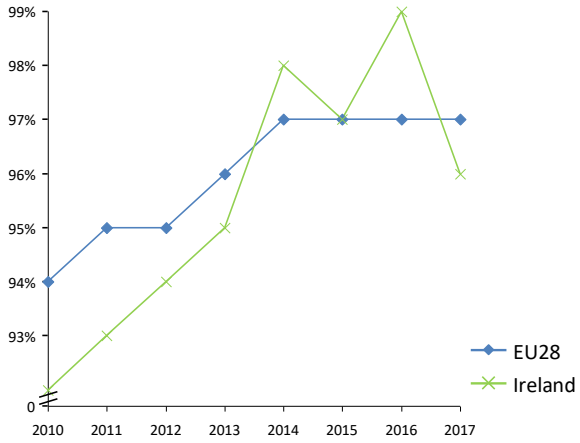
The following graphs present data for the latest Generic Information Society Indicators for Ireland compared to the EU average. Statistical indicators in this section reflect those of Eurostat at the time the Edition is being prepared.

Percentage of households with Internet access in Ireland



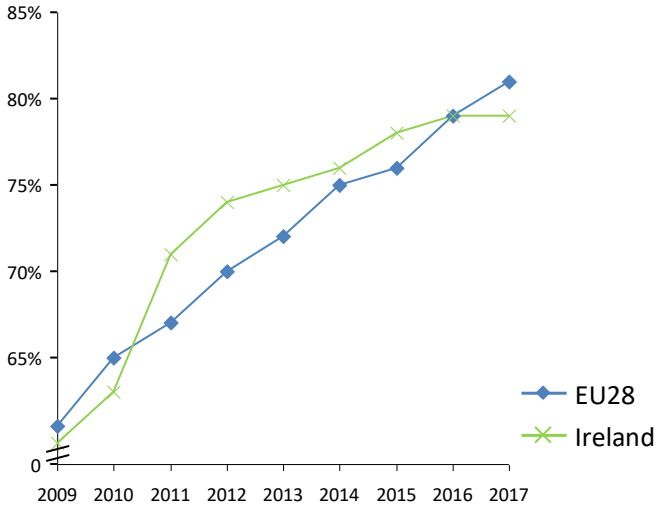
Source: Eurostat Information Society Indicators

Percentage of enterprises with Internet access in Ireland



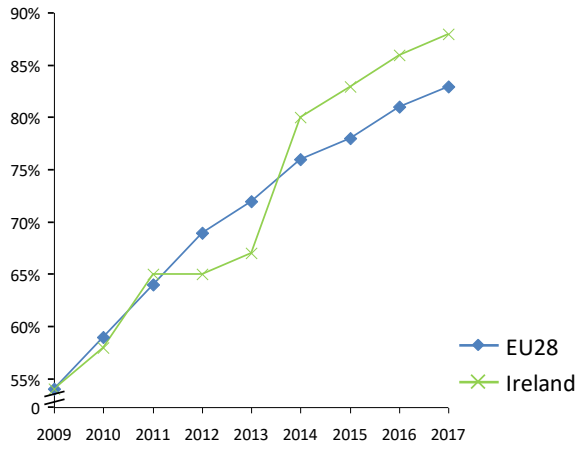
Source: Eurostat Information Society Indicators

Percentage of individuals using the internet at least once a week in Ireland



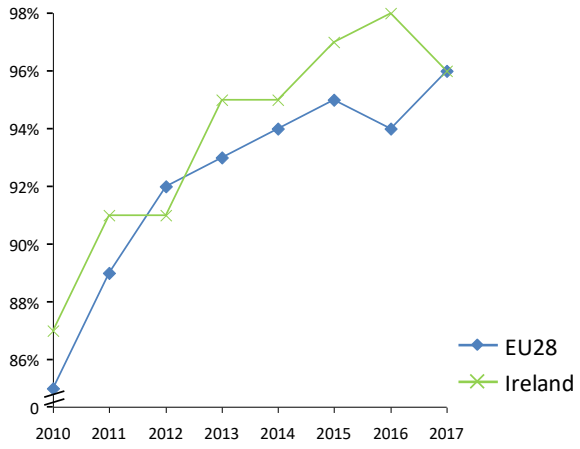
Source: Eurostat Information Society Indicators

Percentage of households with a broadband connection in Ireland



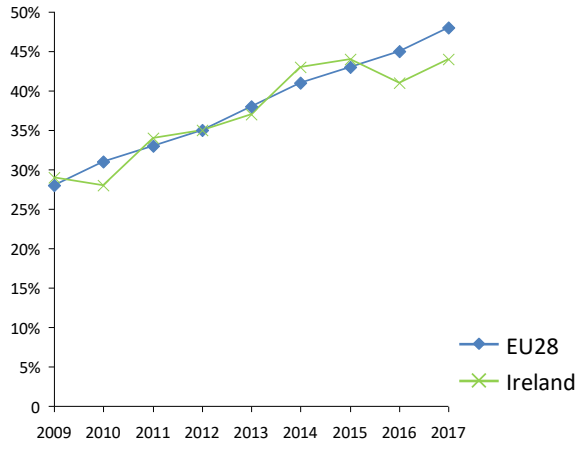
Source: Eurostat Information Society Indicators

Percentage of enterprises with a broadband connection in Ireland



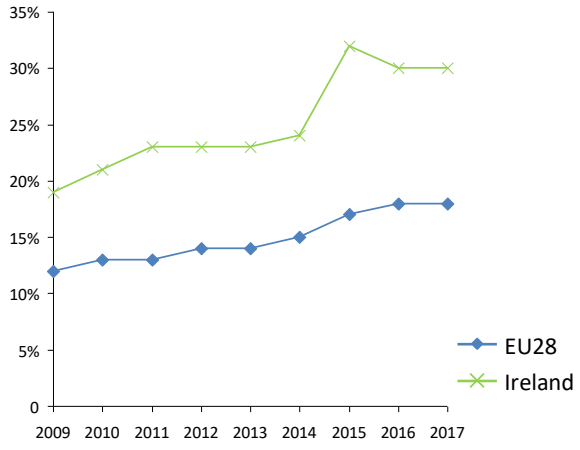
Source: Eurostat Information Society Indicators

Percentage of individuals having purchased/ordered online in the last three months in Ireland



Source: Eurostat Information Society Indicators

Percentage of enterprises having received orders online within the previous year in Ireland

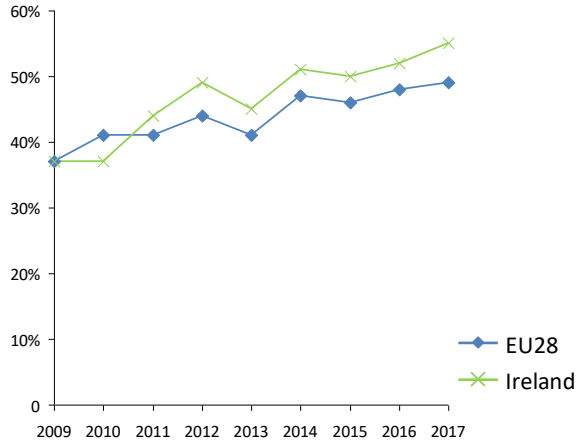


Source: Eurostat Information Society Indicators

eGovernment Indicators

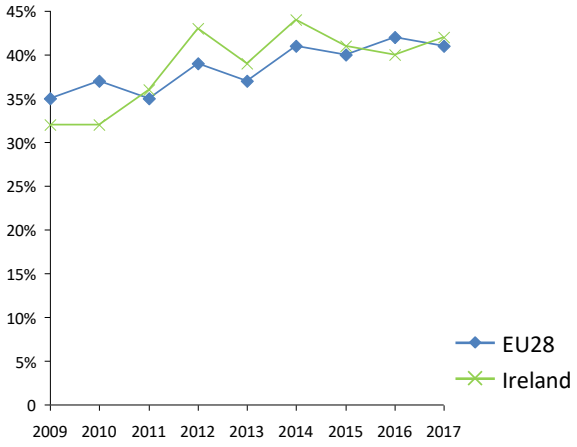
The following graphs present data for the latest eGovernment Indicators for Ireland compared to the EU average. Statistical indicators in this section reflect those of Eurostat at the time the Edition is being prepared.

Percentage of individuals using the internet for interacting with public authorities in Ireland



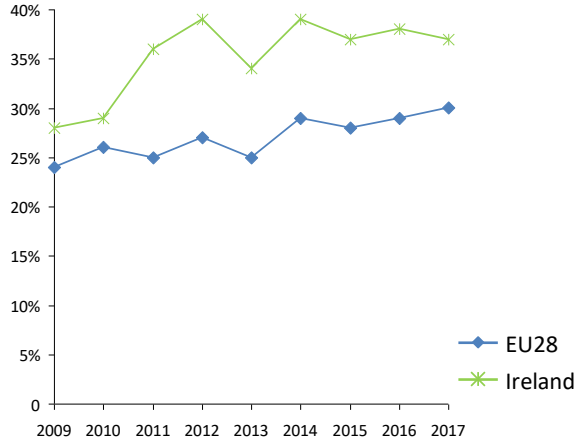
Source: Eurostat Information Society Indicators

Percentage of individuals using the internet for obtaining information from public authorities in Ireland



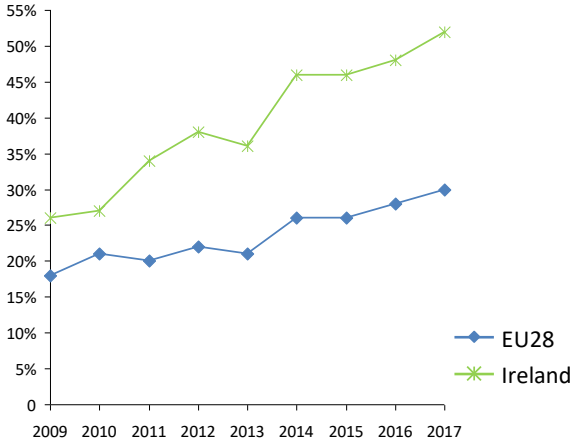
Source: Eurostat Information Society Indicators

Percentage of individuals using the internet for downloading official forms from public authorities in Ireland



Source: Eurostat Information Society Indicators

Percentage of individuals using the internet for sending filled forms to public authorities in Ireland



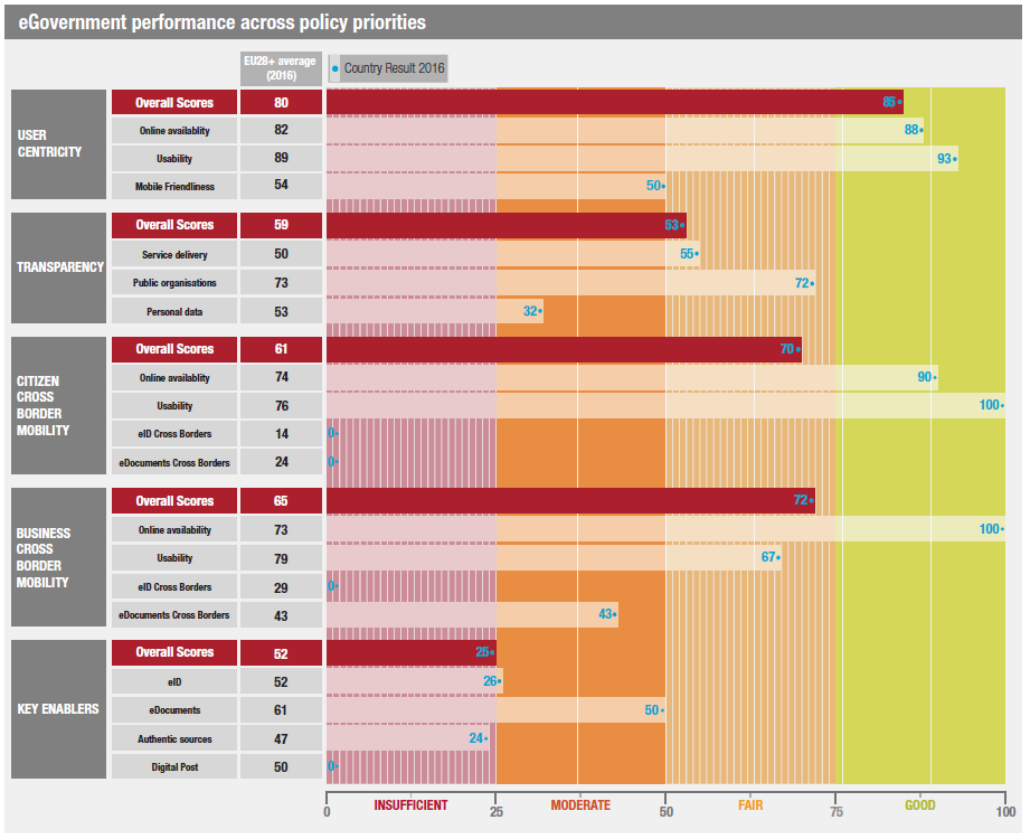
Source: Eurostat Information Society Indicators

eGovernment State of Play

The graph below is the result of the latest eGovernment Benchmark report, which monitors the development of eGovernment in Europe, based on specific indicators. These indicators are clustered within four main top-level benchmarks:

- **User Centricity** – indicates to what extent (information about) a service is provided online and how this is perceived.
- **Transparent Government** – indicates to what extent governments are transparent regarding: i) their own responsibilities and performance, ii) the process of service delivery and iii) personal data involved.
- **Cross Border Mobility –** indicates to what extent EU citizens and businesses can use online services in another country.
- **Key Enablers –** indicates the extent to which five technical pre-conditions are available online. There are: Identification (eID), Electronic documents (eDocuments), Authoritative Sources, and Digital Post. Digital Post refers to the possibility that governments communicate electronically-only with citizens or entrepreneurs through e.g. personal mailboxes or other digital mail solutions.

This year's measurement has selected a set of four life events that cover the most common domains of public services, representative for both business and citizens: Starting a business and early trading operations; losing and finding a Job; Studying; Family Life (new life event, measured for the first time). The figure below presents the development of eGovernment in Ireland compared to the EU average score.



Source: eGovernment Benchmark Report 2017 Country Factsheets

eGovernment Highlights

Main eGovernment changes and key milestones in 2017

eGovernment Strategy

Ireland has embarked on big changes in terms of eGovernment strategy in 2017.

- The eGovernment Strategy 2017-2020 was approved by the Irish government and published in July 2017. The eGovernment Strategy is underpinned by the Government's commitment to be open, flexible and collaborative with people and businesses, using digitisation and technology to increase efficiency and effectiveness and constantly improve public services. The Strategy's 10 key principles also align to the EU eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020.
- A new Open Data Strategy 2017-2020 was also published in July 2017. The Strategy builds on achievements since the launch of the Open Data Initiative in 2014. The Strategy sets out seven strategic themes which will guide the Open Data Initiative over the lifetime of the Strategy. Ireland's Open Data Portal was ranked no. 1 in the European Commission's Open Data Maturity assessment for 2017.
- Our Public Service 2020 is a new framework to drive development and innovation in the Irish public service. Implementation of the framework began in 2018. It is built across three pillars, and focuses on supporting sustainable, continuous progress across the public service.
- Ireland's Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2016-2018 was also published. The Open Government Partnership is built on continuous engagement with the public and Civil Society.

eGovernment Legal Framework

- The most important aspect of change in eGovernment Legal Framework in Ireland was the development of the Data Sharing and Governance Bill. Work is underway on the drafting of the Bill, which will be informed by the findings and recommendations contained in the Oireachtas Committee's report. The Bill is expected to pass through in the course of 2018.
- Ireland is engaging at EU level regarding the proposal for a Regulation establishing a Single Digital Gateway, and implementation of the eIDAS Regulation.

eGovernment Actors

The Minister of State responsible for eGovernment has become Patrick O'Donovan TD.

eGovernment Infrastructure

In 2017, several new eGovernment infrastructures saw the light in Ireland.

- The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer is working on a new Digital Portal to make it easier for citizens to find government services online, supporting better use of data across government in line with best practice in data protection

and sharing, and developing a sustainable resourcing model for ICT across the Public Service.

- The Public Services Card (PSC) and its online equivalent MyGovID enables citizens to have a single approach to online identity across the public service.
- The Where Your Money Goes website was launched to inform people about how the government spends their money.
- The Health Service Executive (HSE) launched an eReferrals Systems, which allows for a general practitioner to refer patients electronically to any acute hospital in the country.

eGovernment Services

Ireland has established numerous new eGovernment services, mostly for citizens and not businesses.

- The Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) Appointments Booking System allows applicants who wish to attend in person at the Visa Public Office to book an appointment online.
- Irish citizens can apply online for a renewal of their passport, a service ensured by the Department of Foreign Affairs.
- The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection implemented a job search website, allowing job-seekers to search for available vacancies and apply online.
- Citizens can send requests to the Garda (national police force), and through their eVetting solution the applications are cleared in a matter of days rather than weeks as under paper format.

Other highlights

There were no other highlights relating to eGovernment in Ireland in the reporting year.

2001 – 2017

For previous eGovernment highlights, please consult the factsheets for past years, accessible through this link.

eGovernment Strategy

Main strategic objectives and principles

eGovernment Strategy 2017-2020

A separate eGovernment Strategy 2017-2020 was approved by Government and published in July 2017. The eGovernment Strategy is underpinned by the Government's commitment to be open, flexible and collaborative with people and businesses, using digitisation and technology to increase efficiency and effectiveness and constantly improve public services. The Strategy's 10 key principles also align to the EU eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020. Ireland's 10 key actions are the following:

- Develop a Digital Service Gateway;
- Maintain and overall Digital Programme plan overseen by the eGovernment Minister;
- Develop existing eID capability;
- Develop similar plans to facilitate business and location identification;
- Enhance data-sharing capability;
- Introduce legislation to support data-sharing ambitions;
- Continue to develop the Open Data Portal;
- Transform the 'back office', i.e. simplify processes and infrastructure to facilitate better, more cohesive and more cost-effective delivery of Government services;
- Ensure appropriate governance is in place;
- Ensure people have the skills and capabilities to help move the programme forward.

Open Data Strategy 2017-2022

A new Open Data Strategy for the period 2017-2022 was published in July 2017. The strategy builds on achievements since the launch of the Open Data Initiative in 2014. Its two core objectives are, firstly, the publication of high value government data in open format, making it publicly available and freely reusable, secondly, engaging with a broad community of stakeholders to promote its social and economic benefits. The Strategy sets out seven strategic themes which will guide the Open Data Initiative over the lifetime of the Strategy:

- Broaden the range of public bodies actively engaged in the Open Data Initiative – the 'Open Data Providers';
- Broaden the scope and improve the quality, quantity and range of Open Data and associated metadata (to be used internally and made available to the public). Improve the quality and range of services provided through the national Open Data portal;
- Continue to engage with all Stakeholders and encourage use of Open Data;
- Support and encourage various groups of Open Data Users;
- Provision of a framework to support and train all Data Providers and building capacity in the management and use of Open Data;

- Evaluate the impact, benefits and risks of the Open Data Initiative and benchmark against other jurisdictions;
- Ensure that effective governance structures are in place to implement the Strategy.

Ireland's Open Data Portal, operated by the Government Reform Unit, now provides access for reuse and redistribution to over 5,000 datasets held by public bodies

The Open Data Portal was ranked number 1 in the European Commission's Open Data Maturity assessment for 2017.

Our Public Service 2020

Our Public Service 2020, published in December 2017, is the new framework to drive development and innovation in the Irish public service. This new phase of public service reform will focus on supporting sustainable, continuous progress across the public service. It aims to build a stronger, more agile, public service and to deliver better quality services to the Irish public.

The framework is built across three pillars and includes both new initiatives and actions that build on reforms already in place. These are:

- Building for Our Public;
- Innovating for Our Future;
- Developing Our People and Organisations.

Implementation of the framework began in 2018.

Public Service ICT Strategy

A new Public Service ICT Strategy has been developed by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) in collaboration with the Public Service Chief Information Officer (CIO) Council. The Strategy, which was approved by Government and published in January 2015, sets out the Government's overall approach to ICT and contains a series of principles to ensure momentum is maintained in this area.

The Public Service ICT Strategy sets out a high-level vision to reinforce ICT's role in supporting Public Service Reform and transformation. It identifies a number of key strategic objectives that will set the future direction for innovation and excellence in ICT within the Public Service:

- **Build to Share:** creating ICT shared services to support integration across the wider Public Service to drive efficiency, standardisation, consolidation, reduction in duplication and control cost;
- **Digital First:** digitisation of key transactional services and the increased use of ICT to deliver improved efficiency within Public Bodies and provide new digital services to citizens, businesses and public servants;
- **Data as an Enabler:** in line with statutory obligations and Data Protection guidelines, facilitate increased data sharing and innovative use of data across all Public Bodies to enable the delivery of integrated services, improve decision making and improve openness and transparency between Government and the public;
- **Improve Governance:** ensure that the ICT strategy is aligned, directed and monitored across Public Bodies to support the specific goals and objectives at a whole-of-government level and with an emphasis on shared commitment; and

- **Increase Capability:** ensure the necessary ICT skills and resources are available to meet the current and future ICT needs of the Public Service.

The Strategy sets out to build on the ICT foundations that will deliver government services of the future. It is aligned with the objectives of the Public Service Reform Plan 2014-2016 and the goals of the Civil Service Renewal Plan and has the overarching objective of providing better outcomes for citizens, businesses and public servants through embracing the latest technological advances.

In the course of 2016, the Irish Government ran numerous in-depth consultations with Secretaries General, Heads of ICT in Government Departments, Industry, and other stakeholders to develop the Public Service ICT Strategy. The outcome of these consultations is an 18 Step Action Plan to develop the five strategic themes of the Strategy (Digital, Data, Build to Share, Governance and Capability). Implementation of the Action Plan is currently underway.

In the Public Service ICT Strategy, data have been identified as a critical enabler of better decision-making and more effective and efficient service provisioning. Work on a **National Data Infrastructure** (NDI) is ongoing. The intention is that the NDI will consist of a set of specifications, systems and infrastructures that will create and maintain a holistic data architecture for the public sector in Ireland, improving its handling of data and providing significant benefits to the citizens and businesses it serves.

Some of the benefits realised from the NDI can include: improved transparency and accountability in allowing individuals to understand what personal data is held on them and how it is used; improved efficiency in the elimination of redundant processes where the same data is collected multiple times; improved decision making and policy evaluation by providing for increased potential for statistical analysis and subsequent insight and intelligence; improved innovation with the ability to reuse data leading to new and improved ways of delivering services.

The 18 Step Action Plan developed by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer to progress the Public Service ICT Strategy focuses on the five strategic themes of the Strategy. There has been good progress across all five pillars and the following are some particular examples:

- The Common Applications are already proving a major success in Departments. The eSubmissions and ePQ (parliamentary questions) systems are live in 10 Departments with rollout continuing. In addition, there is good progress with the development of systems to manage correspondence, Freedom of Information requests and for records management.
- The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer also has a number of initiatives as part of government's response to cloud computing. The Government Cloud Network (GCN) service provides private, cost-effective, high speed network services to Public Service Bodies across the country. As of November 2017, there are 350 nodes on GCN including central Government Departments, the Local Authority sector, Education and Training Boards and various Government bodies.
- In addition, the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer is working with a number of Government Departments in finalising a business case for the establishment of a Pan-Public Service Data Centre.
- The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer is also working on a new Digital Portal to make it easier for citizens to find government services online (the initial phase is available at www.gov.ie); supporting better use of data across government in line with best practice in data protection and sharing; and on developing a sustainable resourcing model for ICT across the Public Service.

Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2016-2018

In December 2016, Ireland published its Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2016-2018.

An online portal was deployed to reach a wide audience, encourage discussion, and inspire a sense of community. Civic forums were also held for further input and insight from civil society. Feedback and recommended actions were then collected and analysed, and then compiled in a first draft that was opened to comments. The Open Government Partnership is built on continuous engagement with the public and Civil Society.

The Action Plan comprises 15 commitments across four main themes:

- Increased Citizen Engagement, to improve policies and services;
- Increased Transparency, to better understand government activities and decisions;
- Open Data, for transparency and innovation;
- Anti-Corruption and Strengthened Governance and Accountability, to ensure integrity in public life.

The National Action Plan will run until the end of June 2018.

eGovernment Legal Framework

Main legal texts impacting on the development of eGovernment

eGovernment Legislation

Current status

There is currently no overall eGovernment legislation in Ireland. However, administrative guidelines for implementation of related Government Decisions are issued by 'Circular'. The latest circular regarding eGovernment was Circular 5 of 2012 Arrangements for eGovernment, which advised of new arrangements for enhancing and monitoring progress with eGovernment in keeping with the Public Service Reform Plan and Government Decision which approved the previous eGovernment Strategy, eGovernment 2012-2015.

The main focus now is on the implementation of the Public Service ICT Strategy and the eGovernment Strategy 2017 – 2020.

Data-Sharing and Governance

In October 2013, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform brought a 'Memorandum to Government', setting out a series of actions to improve data-sharing in the public service. Chief among these was the development of the Heads of a Data-Sharing and Governance Bill.

On 1 August 2014, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform published a policy paper entitled, 'Data Sharing and Governance: Policy Proposals', which set out key elements of proposed legislation. Interested parties were invited to make submissions responding to the policy proposals. The Department received many constructive submissions, which are published below. The submissions received have contributed significantly to the development of policy on Data-Sharing, and the Department is very grateful to the respondents for their contributions to date.

On 24 November 2014, a public information event was held to discuss the outcomes of the consultation. The event was addressed by Robert Watt, Secretary General of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform; Helen Dixon, Data Protection Commissioner; and Daragh O'Brien of Castlebridge Associates. This event allowed for useful discussion of the main policy issues from different perspectives.

Having considered the submissions received, the Department prepared a draft General Scheme of the Data-Sharing and Governance Bill which was submitted to Government for approval to commence drafting of the Bill.

Freedom of Information Legislation

Freedom of Information Act (2014)

A new Freedom of Information Act came into force on 14 October 2014. It provides for the commitments in relation to freedom of information contained in the Programme for Government by removing the main substantive restrictions in access to official information introduced in 2003, extending FOI to all public bodies unless specifically exempt in whole or in part and providing a framework for the extension of FOI to non-public bodies in receipt of significant funding from the Exchequer. The legislation also provided an opportunity for a

necessary consolidation modernisation and updating of the legislation. The Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003 are **repealed** under the new Act.

Freedom of Information (Amendment) Act (2003)

The Freedom of Information Act (FOI) went into effect on 21 October 1998. It was lastly amended on 11 April 2003 notably in relation to Section 19 (Government Records) and Section 20 (Deliberations of Public Bodies). FOI asserts the right of members of the public to obtain access to official information to the greatest extent possible consistent with the public interest and the right to privacy.

FOI derives from the following broad principles:

- Decisions by public bodies should be more open to public scrutiny;
- Those affected by decisions of public bodies should have the right to know the criteria used in making those decisions;
- Citizens, as shareholders in public bodies, should have the right to examine and review the deliberations and processes of public bodies;
- Every individual should have the right to: know, correct and complete information held in government records about him or her.

The public bodies prescribing to the regulations of the Act include universities, institutes of technology and colleges of education, RTE and TG4, major service providers in the intellectual and physical disability fields, voluntary hospitals and bodies in the enterprise/support sector. A full list of public bodies to which the FOI Act applies is available on the FOI Central Policy Unit website. The Act does not apply to the National Police Service and a number of other bodies, including the Health and Safety Authority, the Central Bank, the Financial Services Authority, the Irish Financial Services Regulatory Authority and the National Treasury Management Agency.

Public bodies are required to publish information relating to their structure, functions, duties, descriptions of records, and the internal rules, procedures, practices, guidelines and interpretations. The Office of the Information Commissioner oversees and enforces the Act. Decisions of the Commissioner are binding and can be appealed only on a point of law.

Data Protection/Privacy Legislation

Data Protection Strategy 2014 - 2016

The mission of the strategy is to protect the individual's right to data privacy by enabling people to know, and to exercise control over, how their personal information is used, in accordance with the Data Protection Acts and related legislation.

In July 2015, the Government approved the drafting of the Data Sharing and Governance Bill 2015, along the lines of the General Scheme, subject to such drafting or technical amendments as may be agreed between the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform and the Attorney General.

Pre-legislative scrutiny hearings on the Bill were held in April and May 2017 by the Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform, and *Taoiseach* (Prime Minister). Officials from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, the Department of Justice, the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner and representatives of civil society groups with an interest in the area of digital rights and data protection attended these hearings. The Committee published its report in July 2017.

Work is underway on the drafting of the Bill, which will be informed by the findings and recommendations contained in the Committee's report. The Bill must also take into account the provisions of EU General Data Protection Regulation, which was published in April 2016 and comes into effect on 25 May 2018. It is intended to submit the text of the Bill to Government for approval to publish and commence passage through the *Oireachtas* (National Parliament) in the first quarter of 2018.

Data Protection (Amendment) Act (2003)

The Data Protection Act of 1988 was amended in 2003 to ensure full compliance with the EU Data Protection Directive (95/46/EC). The aim of the Directive is to establish common standards of data protection across Member States in order to protect personal privacy and to ensure the smooth operation of the internal market, while ensuring adequate levels of data protection in countries outside the European Economic Area to facilitate and encourage international trade (Department of Justice and Law Reform). The Data Protection Commissioner oversees and enforces the Act.

Copyright and Related Rights Act (2000).

This Act affects a total reform of Irish copyright and related rights law, bringing it fully into line with the requirements of EU and international law in this area. It places Ireland among world leaders in terms of standards for copyright protection.

eSignatures Legislation

Electronic Commerce Act (2000)

The Electronic Commerce Act 2000, which became law on 20 September 2000, implements the EU Directive on a Community framework for electronic signatures (1999/93/EC). The Act provides (with some exceptions) for the legal recognition of electronic signatures, electronic writing and electronic contracts. It authorises the use of encryption and sets the rights and obligations of Certification Service Providers (CSPs).

eCommerce Legislation

Electronic Commerce Act (2000)

The Electronic Commerce Act became law on 20 September 2000. It implements the EU Directive on a Community framework for electronic signatures (1999/93/EC) and, in part, the EU Directive on electronic commerce (2000/31/EC).

The Act provides (with some exceptions) for the legal recognition of electronic signatures, electronic writing and electronic contracts. It authorises the use of encryption and sets the rights and obligations of Certification Service Providers (CSPs).

European Communities (Directive 2000/31/EC) Regulations (2003)

The Minister for Enterprise Trade & Employment signed the regulations in 2003 with a view to giving effect to those remaining provisions of the EU Directive on electronic commerce (2000/31/EC) not transposed into Irish law by the Electronic Commerce Act.

eCommunications Legislation

Communications Regulation Act (2002)

By means of the Communications Regulation Act 2002 and of secondary legislation (a number of statutory instruments), Ireland transposed all Directives under the EU regulatory framework for electronic communications, namely: Directive 2002/21/EC (Framework Directive); 2002/20/EC (Authorisation Directive); 2002/19/EC (Access Directive); 2002/22/EC (Universal Service Directive); and 2002/58/EC (Directive on privacy and electronic communications).

eProcurement Legislation

The Office of Government Procurement commenced operations in 2014 and together with four key sectors (Health, Defence, Education and Local Government), is responsible for sourcing all goods and services on behalf of the Public Service. In addition, the OGP is also responsible for the procurement policy and procedures. Information on procurement legislation, directives and regulations can be found at http://www.procurement.ie/publications.

eInvoicing Legislation

The Office of Government Procurement is responsible for eInvoicing in Ireland. There is no legislation in place specifically relating to the support for, or provision of, electronic invoicing in the Public Sector. There are also no common platforms across the Public Sector either.

Nevertheless, Ireland transposed Directive 2010/45/EU, which establishes electronic invoices on an equal footing with paper invoices.

European Communities (Award of Public Authorities' Contracts) Regulations (2006)

Ireland implemented on 29 June 2006 the EU Directive on the coordination of procedures for the award of public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts (2004/18/EC) into Irish law with the enactment of the European Communities (Award of Public Authorities' Contracts) Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 329 of 2006).

European Communities (Award of Contracts by Utilities Undertakings) Regulations (2007)

The 2007 regulations (S.I. No. 50 of 2007) gave effect to the EU Directive on the co-ordination of procurement procedures of entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors (2004/17/EC), as amended by Directive 2005/51/EC of 7 September 2005.

National Public Procurement Policy Framework (2004)

The National Public Procurement Policy Framework, published in 2004, aims at driving the four strands of the procurement reform agenda: aggregating public sector demand, building procurement capacity/capability in the public sector, developing procurement training and education, and incremental development of eProcurement systems.

Re-use of Public Sector Information (PSI)

European Communities (Re-Use of Public Sector Information) (Amendment) Regulations (2015)

In December 2015, the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Mr Brendan Howlin T.D., signed statutory regulations which transposed Directive 2013/37/EU **on the re-use of Public Sector Information (PSI)** into Irish law, thereby enhancing the rights of Irish citizens and businesses to re-use existing information held by public bodies in new products and services.

Directive 2013/37/EU (which amends an earlier PSI Directive from 2003 (Directive 2003/98/EC)) affects how the information can be re-used, once it has been legitimately accessed, by placing obligations on the public sector to the benefits of re-users. It has amended the PSI regime established by the 2003 Directive in the following ways:

- The general principle underlying the PSI regime is changed to ensure that accessible documents are re-usable for commercial and non-commercial purposes;
- The fees chargeable by public sector bodies for re-use of documents are capped at marginal cost, with important exceptions;
- The means of redress available to a re-user must now include the possibility of review by an impartial body capable of making binding decisions (In Ireland, the Information Commissioner will take on this role);
- The scope of the regime is extended to documents held by museums, libraries and archives, with important differences around charging and permissions;
- There are new transparency requirements for situations in which charges are made.

These enhancements to the EU-wide arrangements for access to Public Sector Information complement the Government's overall open data agenda, which aims to encourage making available certain types of data and information held by public bodies (for example data on transport, education, crime and environment) for the benefit of citizens and organisations who wish to make use of it for either commercial or non-commercial purposes.

Information on the relevant Statutory Instruments, guidance and licences relating to the re-use of PSI data can be found at https://data.gov.ie/psi.

European Communities (Re-Use of Public Sector Information) Regulations (2005)

This statutory instrument (secondary legislation, S.I. No. 279 of 2005) transposes the EU Directive on the re-use of public sector information (2003/98/EC) into Irish Law. It came into effect on 1 July 2005.

eGovernment Actors

Main roles and responsibilities

National eGovernment

Policy/Strategy

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

The overall responsibility for the eGovernment policy and the provision of central eGovernment infrastructure and services lies with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

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Coordination

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform has the overall responsibility for coordinating the implementation of eGovernment policy across the Public Service in Ireland.

Implementation

Government Departments and Agencies

Individual Government Departments and Agencies are responsible for developing specific eGovernment plans in relation to their own areas of operation and for implementing eGovernment projects within the framework of their competences.

Support

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform monitors eGovernment development and provides reports as required to Government.

Audit/Assurance

Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General

The Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General is tasked with:

- Auditing and reporting on the accounts of public bodies;
- Establishing that transactions of public bodies are in accordance with the legal authorities governing them and that funds are applied for the purposes intended;
- Providing assurance on the system of internal financial control put in place by each body;
- Examining whether each body administers its resources economically and efficiently, and sets up mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of operations.

Data Protection

Data Protection Commissioner

The Data Protection Commissioner is responsible for upholding the rights of individuals as set out in the Data Protection Act, and enforcing the obligations upon data controllers. The

Commissioner is appointed by the Government and is independent in exercising his/her functions.

Other

Office of the Information Commissioner

The main functions of the Information Commissioner are the following:

- Review the decisions of public bodies in relation to Freedom of Information (FOI) Act requests and, where necessary, the making of binding, new decisions;
- Review the operation of the FOI Act to ensure that public bodies comply with its provisions;
- Foster an attitude of openness among public bodies by encouraging the voluntary publication of information above and beyond the minimum requirements of the Act;
- Prepare and publicise observations on the practical operation of the Act.

Regional & Local eGovernment

Strategy

Local Councils

Local authorities develop strategies based on their respective ICT and eGovernment needs.

Implementation

Local Councils

Local authorities implement their respective strategies with the support of the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA).

Support

Local Government Management Agency

The Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) is a state agency of the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government. It was established in 2012 to provide a range of services to the Local Government Sector and was created following the merger of the Local Government Computer Services Board, Local Government Management Services Board and An Comhairle Leabharlanna. The LGMA provides a range of services within the context of its statutory remit, in support of co-ordinated and cost-effective delivery of Local Government services and policy.

Audit/Assurance

Local Government Audit Service (LGAS)

The LGAS is an external audit service providing independent credibility to the financial stewardship function of local authorities and other bodies.

eGovernment Infrastructure

Main eGovernment infrastructure components

Portals

Government portal

Public Bodies continue to deliver informational and transactional services through their own websites. In line with the eGovernment Strategy 2010 – 2020, work is currently underway to develop a new Digital Service Gateway, or Portal, which will enable the public and businesses to easily find and access online public services, to register for transactions as well as targeted information and to ultimately be able to provide information to the Government on a 'once only' basis, using the existing MyGovID facility.

The first phase of a new Digital Service Gateway, as identified in the eGovernment Strategy, is now available on the government portal at www.gov.ie. This is a modern front-end website that presents Government services of most interest/relevance to citizens and businesses.

Citizens Information website

Launched in April 2001, the Citizens Information website is run by the Citizens Information Board, Ireland's national agency responsible for providing information and advice on social services, operating under the aegis of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. The website provides guidance on a wide range of subjects, such as employment rights, buying a home, moving abroad and education.

The subjects covered are divided into 14 categories, representing life events and activities, allowing users to readily access a relevant topic. Sourced from a wide variety of service providers and agencies, the information is backed up by case studies, supporting documentation and downloadable forms.

Irish Government News Service portal

The Irish Government News Service portal merrionstreet.ie affords a view of government from the vantage point of Government Buildings itself. It reviews the wide range of government activity and then reports certain key events as news. All government press releases are accessible either via RSS feed or links to all Government Departments. The site's central task is to select a variety of events and report on them objectively. It also features 'Issues', where useful thematic information, not tied to a particular date, is presented. It enables people with an interest in Government dealings to view the latest developments on one website. It is produced by a team in Government Buildings, involving the Government Information Service, Government Press and IT.

Local Enterprise

There are over 80 different Government supports for Irish start-ups and small businesses. This online guide is to help Irish start-ups and small businesses navigate the range of Government supports to see which could possibly apply. Local Enterprise Office provides advice, information and support to starting up or growing a business. With dedicated teams across the Local Authority network in Ireland, Local Enterprise Offices offer a wide range of experience, skills and services.

Additional Portals

Additional portals include for example:

- The Department of Employment Affairs Social Protection's network of Intreo Centres, which provide practical, tailored employment services and supports for jobseekers and employers alike;
- Online services such as www.businessregulation.ie, which provides, in one place, details of the main regulations which affect businesses.

Network

Government Networks (GN)

GN is a privately managed, wide area multi-carrier, national network (WAN) connecting public service agencies on a data, voice and video capable network. It is designed primarily to facilitate easy, efficient, secure and reliable communication between Government agencies, and to support existing and future Government applications. A mechanism for providing agencies with a secure access to the Internet is included, as well as a means for agencies to securely host Internet services. The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in conjunction with the Government Networks Programme Board has established GN on behalf of the non-commercial public sector.

GN offers a number of potential cost and operational benefits: inter-agency collaboration and delivery of joined-up government services; access for all agencies to network capability and products/technology (regardless of size); execution of a number of standard day-to-day infrastructure services allowing agencies to focus on their core programmes and services; improvement of security of government information systems; incorporation of Internet access costs for Government agencies into one highly resilient infrastructure; commercial advantages of an aggregated procurement approach, resulting in reduced costs.

As a result of Government Networks, public service bodies in approximately 45 towns and cities in Ireland now have access to high speed, resilient network connectivity and the rollout is continuing nationwide.

eIdentification/eAuthentication

Personal Public Service Number (PPSN)

The PPS number is a unique personal identifier and is used extensively by Government Departments and other authorised users to provide the public with secure access to a wide range of public services. State agencies that use PPS numbers to identify individuals include the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, the Revenue Commissioners and the Health Service Executive (HSE). It is mandatorily assigned to every Irish child at birth. The PPSN may be used in:

- All social welfare services;
- The Free Travel Pass;
- Pupil ID;
- Public health services, including the medical card and the drugs payment scheme;
- Child immunisation;
- Schemes run by the Revenue Commissioners, such as mortgage interest relief;

- Housing grants;
- Driver Theory Testing and driver licences.

The 'SAFE' programme, jointly sponsored by the Departments of Social and Family Affairs and of Public Expenditure and Reform, has defined levels of person registration and authentication.

MyGovID

MyGovID is a new single online identity for Irish citizens allowing access to a range of online public services more easily, using only one password. MyGovID gives users a safer and faster access to public services from their PC, smart phone or a tablet device.

PAYE Anytime Service

The Revenue Commissioners' PAYE Anytime Service provides a means for PAYE (employees) customers to: view their tax record; claim a wide range of tax credits (service charges, union subscriptions and Rent Credit etc.); apply for tax refunds including health expenses; update an address; declare additional income; request a review of tax liability for previous years; re-allocate credits between spouses and track correspondence submitted to Revenue. PAYE is based on the use of a Personal Identification Number.

In 2015, Revenue introduced myAccount, which is a single access point for secure online services (excluding ROS) such as PAYE Anytime, Local Property Tax, Home Renovation Incentive and many more using a single login and password.

Revenue Online Service (ROS)

The Revenue Commissioners also provide a Revenue Online Service (ROS) for business customers. This system provides a means for business customers to: file returns online; make payments by debit card, debit instruction or online banking (Online Banking applies to Income Tax only); obtain online details of personal/clients Revenue Accounts; calculate tax liability; conduct business electronically and claim repayments. The ROS service is based on qualified electronic signatures.

Single Customer View

Every resident of Ireland appears in a number of public service databases. For example, a typical person of working age appears in the databases of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (PPSN), Revenue (PAYE), HSE (Drug Payment Scheme), Department of Foreign Affairs (Passport) and Department of Transport (driver licencing and vehicle registration).

The Single Customer View is a system which takes records from these databases and links them together. The data stored is the 'Public Service Identity' dataset as defined in the Social Welfare legislation.

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform maintains and operates the Single Customer View on behalf of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection which is the Data Controller for the purposes of Data Protection.

Electronic Passports

In October 2006, the Passport Office within the Department of Foreign Affairs started issuing the Irish electronic passport (ePassport). An ePassport is the same as a traditional passport with the addition of a small integrated circuit (or 'chip') embedded on the photo

page. This chip securely stores biographical information which is visually displayed on the data page of the passport and a digital image of the photograph which facilitates the use of facial recognition technology at ports-of-entry. The chip technology allows the information stored on an ePassport to be read by special chip readers at a close distance. It incorporates digital signature technology to verify the authenticity of the data stored on the chip. The Irish ePassport facilitates facial measurements which can be used with facial recognition technology to verify the identity of a bearer.

In 2015, a Passport Card was introduced. The Irish Passport Card, can be used by Irish citizens for travel within the EU/EEA and Switzerland. The Card is available to all Irish citizens who are over 18 years and in possession of a valid Irish Passport. Applications can be submitted online or through the free app from anywhere in the world.

Irish citizens who hold an Irish Passport or held an Irish Passport that expired within the previous five years can now apply online for renewal.

Public Service Card (PSC)

The PSC ensures that people can access public services across a number of channels, including online, via telephone or in person at a public office, with a minimum of duplication while preserving their privacy to the maximum extent possible.

In February 2011, approximately three million PSCs started being issued for citizens over 16 allowing access to public services. Issuing a PSC involves a face-to-face registration process which includes the collection of a photograph and signature. Online appointments to be registered for a Public Services Card (or to get a PPS number) can be made at https://www.mywelfare.ie/. PSCs will gradually replace cards currently in use, such as the Social Services Card and the Free Travel card, with highly secure cards featuring laser engraving personalisation, a contact chip, a signature, a photograph and an expiry date. The rollout of the Public Services Card (PSC) is ongoing with over 3 million cards issued by the end of 2017.

The PSC and its online equivalent MyGovID enables citizens to have a single approach to online identity across the public service, provide more and better services online, create a user centric digital government, and align Ireland with European initiatives such as the Digital Single Market and the European eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020.

Event Publishing Service

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform runs the Event Publishing Service which provides information on registered deaths to all public service bodies.

eProcurement

eTenders Procurement portal

eTenders is the central government eProcurement platform serving as a single point of access for all Irish public sector procurement opportunities. The site advertises on a daily basis notices for EU and sub-EU threshold contracts for the public sector including central Government, local authorities, Health Boards and hospitals, universities and schools. The service is freely available for use by the public. Contracting authorities are obligated to use the eTendering platform and to electronically publish procurement opportunities over EUR 10,000. In addition, it is mandatory for public authorities to use the electronic means for all payments, as well as for ICT purchases. In terms of procurement efficiency, the innovative SupplyGov.ie (formerly LAQuotes.ie) is a procurement system which facilitates

Local Authorities and other state agencies in procuring goods and services from Suppliers and Contractors.

The online tendering tools provided for public sector purchasers include the online creation of notices with approved eSender status and the attachment of tender documents for downloading by suppliers. Suppliers can submit tenders online, manage their tenders and receive email alerts when tenders of interest to them have been advertised. An online pre-qualification questionnaire submission and evaluation facility is also in place.

The site is managed by http://www.procurement.ie/.

Other Infrastructure

Registration of Property Transactions

The Property Registration Authority, the State organisation responsible for the registration of property transactions in Ireland, provides a wide range of spatial information online to customers. This has been facilitated by the successful roll-out of a major programme of state of the art Information Technology, the most notable of which have been Integrated Title Registration Information System – ITRIS – (1999-2002); Digital Mapping Project (2005-2010); and conversion of the entire register and associated indices from paper into a fully digitised format (2006-2009). As a result of these projects there are now 2.14 million titles, representing almost 2.8 million individual parcels of land, registered in the Irish Land Registry.

By accessing an extensive digital register, available through Landdirect.ie, all users can conduct mapping searches, search by location or address, view details of all property registered in the Land Registry and order official copy documents.

National Mapping

Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSi) is responsible for creating and maintaining the definitive mapping records of the State. OSi has designed and developed a standardised, authoritative digital referencing framework that enables the consistent referencing and integration of national data related to location. This framework, known as PRIME2, provides the means for GIS data users to accurately integrate and use multiple data sources to provide for better analysis and decision making, optimising resources and delivering efficiencies.

OSi provide a range of online services including GeoHive and MapGenie.

Where Your Money Goes

The aim of the Where Your Money Goes website is transparency, and to inform people about how the government spends their money. Information is broken down into sector (health, welfare, education, etc.) giving the public an easy way to see how and where the money is being spent. With 10 years' worth of data available, and using interactive charts and graphs, users can explore the data in a variety of ways.

Health Service Executive

The Health Service Executive has implemented three new services.

Firstly, the HSE Maternity and Newborn Clinical Information Systems. This system was implemented in Cork University Maternity Hospital in late 2016 and subsequently for

maternity services in Kerry. The solution was implemented in the Rotunda and National Maternity Hospitals in 2017. It is a fully digital solution resulting in the elimination of paper records.

Secondly, the Electronic Blood Tracking System (EBTS). The third and final phase of the implementation programme is present in all 48 hospitals.

Thirdly, the HSE eReferrals System. The solution allows for a general practitioner to refer patients electronically to any acute hospital in the country.

eGovernment Services for Citizens

Availability and sophistication of eServices for Citizens

The information in this section presents an overview of the basic public services, which were identified by the European Commission and Member States under the Your Europe initiative that is an EU site designed to help citizens do things in other European countries – avoiding unnecessary inconvenience and red tape in regard to moving, living, studying, working, shopping or simply travelling abroad.

The groups of services for citizens are as follows:

1. **Travel**
2. **Work and retirement**
3. **Vehicles**
4. **Residence formalities**
5. **Education and youth**
6. **Family**
7. **Consumers**

1. Travel

Passenger rights, documents you need

Passport

Responsibility: Central Government, Department of Foreign Affairs, Passport Office

Website: http://www.dfa.ie; https://www.eforms.gov.ie/en/, https://passportonline.dfa.ie/

Description: Information on passport application process and online facility to request application forms. Passport holders can register to receive reminders of an expiry date and can track the progress of their passport application online. A passport appointment service is available for those travelling at short notice.
The Irish Passport Card, can be used by Irish citizens for travel within the EU/EEA and Switzerland. The Card is available to all Irish citizens who are over 18 years and hold a valid Irish Passport. Applications can be submitted online or through the free app from anywhere in the world.
Irish citizens who hold an Irish Passport or held an Irish Passport that expired within the previous five years can apply online for renewal if their name is the same as that on their previous Passport.

TravelWise

Responsibility: Central Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Website: http://www.dfa.ie/travelwise/

Description: A new smartphone application developed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade was designed to help Irish citizens to stay safe and well informed while travelling or living overseas.

Immigration Registration

Responsibility: Department of Justice and Equality

Website: https://burghquayregistrationoffice.inis.gov.ie

Description: An online appointment booking and information provision system for immigration registration.

Re-Entry Visas

Responsibility: Department of Justice and Equality

Website: https://burghquayregistrationoffice.inis.gov.ie/

Description: The Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) appointment booking system allows applicants who wish to attend in person at the Visa Public Office to book an appointment with the Visa Officer in order to have their re-entry visa application assessed.

Money and charges

VAT: declaration, notification

Responsibility: Central Government, Revenue Commissioners

Website: http://www.revenue.ie/

Description: The system allows submission and payment facilities for all VAT returns by all traders or their nominated tax agent. In addition to the standard VAT return, the System supports submission of - Annual Return of Trading Details (RTD Form) and statistical returns - Intrastat and VIES as required.

2. Work and retirement

Working abroad, finding a job abroad, retiring abroad

Income taxes: declaration, notification of assessment

Responsibility: Central Government, Revenue Commissioners

Website: https://www.revenue.ie/

Description: The Irish Pay-As-You-Earn (PAYE) system is based on a cumulative system whereby tax deductions are balanced over an entire tax year. The tax deductions are made at source and various allowances are also calculated at source. This proactive approach to service delivery means that there is no requirement for the vast majority of employees to submit a tax declaration. Most tax credits/reliefs are automatically carried forward on the PAYE taxpayer's record. Furthermore, claims for credit and tax record look-ups can be performed online.

Job search services by labour offices

Responsibility: Central Government, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection

Website: http://www.welfare.ie/en/pages/intreo_home.aspx

Description: Intreo is a new service from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. Intreo is a single point of contact for all employment and income supports.

Professional qualifications

Legal information systems

Responsibility: Several entities

Website: http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/

Description: Several websites provide Irish legislation in an electronic form. The electronic Irish Statute Book (eISB) includes Acts of the Oireachtas and Statutory Instruments, the official versions of which remain the printed versions published by Government Publications. The eISB also includes the Legislation Directory. Other sources of Irish information are for example the Irish Legal Information Initiatiatice, Irish Statute Book, or Irish Law Site.

Taxes, unemployment and benefits

Personal Public Service Number (PPSN) I

Responsibility: Departments of Social and Family Affairs and of Finance

Website: http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social_welfare/irish_social_welfare_system/personal_public_service_number.html

Description: The PPSN is a common identification number used for taxation and social welfare purposes which is gradually being extended across the public service in the interest of improving customer service. It is mandatorily assigned to every Irish child at birth.

Personal Public Service Number (PPSN) II

Responsibility: Irish Tax and Customs

Website: https://www.revenue.ie/

Description: This eService provides a means for PAYE (employees) customers to: view their tax record; claim a wide range of tax credits (service charges, union subscriptions and Rent Credit etc.); claim a wide range of tax credits and wide range of tax refunds including health expenses; update an address; declare additional income; request a review of tax liability for previous years; re-allocate credits between spouses as well as track the correspondence submitted to Revenue. PAYE is based on the use of a Personal Identification Number.

Unemployment benefits

Responsibility: Central Government, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection

Website: https://www.welfare.ie/

Description: Provides online services and comprehensive details of the main unemployment payments available from the Department. The platform also provides the following online; appointment services, jobseeker services, and children and family services.

Jobs Ireland

Responsibility: Central Government, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection

Website: https://www.jobsireland.ie/

Description: The website allows job-seekers to create an account and search for available vacancies. It also has a filter, allowing for better matches between job-seekers and available vacancies and allows job-seekers to apply for available positions online.

Employment Permits Online

Responsibility: Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation

Website: https://epos.djei.ie/

Description: This is an end-to-end online application system for employment permits. Benefits include a faster turnaround of applications into decisions; easy to use supporting documentation, and built-in validation.

3. Vehicles

Driving licence

Driver's licence

Responsibility: Central Government, Department of Transport, Road Safety Authority

Website: http://www.rsa.ie/; https://eforms.gov.ie/en/

Description: Information and forms for download purposes. Licence holders can register for an automatic reminder of an expiry date. An online driving test application is also available.

Registration

Car registration (new, used, imported cars)

Responsibility: Central Government, Revenue Commissioners

Website: https://www.revenue.ie/

Description: The system allows registered motor dealers to fully register and pay the registration tax for all new vehicles. All used imported vehicles are required to be produced for inspection at a Revenue Office.

Driving Test

Driver's Theory Test

Responsibility: Road Safety Authority

Website: www.theorytest.ie/driver-theory-test/

Description: Users can prepare for and book driving theory tests online.

4. Residence (and other) formalities

Documents and formalities

Certificates (birth, marriage): request and delivery

Responsibility: Central Government, Department of Health and Children, General Register Office

Website: www.certificates.ie

Description: Electronic form to apply for a life event certificate.

Criminal Record Certificate

Responsibility: An Garda Síochána (Ireland's National Police Service)

Website: http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/moving_country/moving_abroad/leaving_ireland/police_certificate.html

Description: Not available as an eService.

Declaration to the police (e.g. in case of theft)

Responsibility: Central Government, An Garda Síochana (National Police Service)

Website: http://www.garda.ie/

Description: Online submission of report to An Garda Siochana.

Declaration to the police (e.g. in case of theft)

Responsibility: An Garda Síochana (National Police Service)

Website: https://vetting.garda.ie/Application/About

Responsibility: Efficiencies resulting from the introduction of the Garda (national police force) eVetting solution have reduced the turnaround time for clearing applications to a matter of days rather than weeks under the paper application system. The solution facilitates a much simpler application form and allows the applicant to track the progress of the application throughout the process.

Housing (building and housing, environment)

Responsibility: Local Government

Website: http://www.dublincity.ie/

Description: Electronic intake with an official form to start the procedure to obtain a building or renovation permission.

Waste

Responsibility: Environment, Community and Local Government

Website: http://www.environ.ie/en/LocalGovernment/LocalGovernmentAdministration/LocalAuthorities/

Description: The local authority can provide advice on waste disposal and recycling facilities via phone or in person. No eService is available yet.

Elections abroad

Participation in Irish elections

Responsibility: Local Authorities

Website: http://www.checktheregister.ie/PublicPages/AppForms.aspx

Description: Participation in the Irish elections is not available as an eService. Applications forms are available on www.checktheregister.ie, however when complemented they must be returned to the local authority.

5. Education and youth

School, university

Enrolment in higher education/university

Responsibility: Higher education institutions, Central Applications Office (CAO)

Website: http://www.cao.ie/

Description: Online application system, including submission and payment of application fees, confirmation and offers. CAO has been delegated by higher education institutions in Ireland the task of centrally processing applications to their first year undergraduate courses. The participating institutions retain the function of making decisions on admissions.

Public libraries (availability of catalogues, search tools)

Responsibility: Central Government/Local Government, the Library Council

Website: http://www.library.ie/; www.borrowbooks.ie

Description: Libraries offer the possibility to search for a specific title and to perform an electronic reservation. Libraries also offer the possibility of joining book clubs, as well as a wide range of other services.

Student Grants

Responsibility: Central Government/Local Government, Department of Education and Skills

Website: https://www.grantsonline.ie/

Description: Online applications for Student Grants. Under the free fees initiative, the DES meets the tuition fees of eligible students who are attending full-time undergraduate courses. Such courses must generally be of at least two years duration, at approved colleges. These colleges include the publicly funded colleges and a number of non-publicly funded religious colleges which are approved for the purposes of the Higher Education Grants Scheme and which are part of the CAO system of entry.

Student Grants Application System

Responsibility: Student Universal Support Ireland

Website: https://www.susi.ie/

Description: The website allows eligible college students to apply for university grants. The website is currently updated, most recent developments include enhanced security, more automated validation and extended data-sharing with other departments and agencies.

Researchers

Information and assistance to researchers

Responsibility: EURAXESS Ireland

Website: https://www.euraxess.ie/

Description: EURAXESS Ireland provides information and assistance to mobile researchers – by means of the web portal and with the support of the national EURAXESS Service Centres. The portal contains practical information concerning professional and daily life, as well as information on job and funding opportunities.

Public libraries (availability of catalogues, search tools)

Responsibility: Central Government/Local Government, the Library Council

Website: http://www.library.ie/; www.borrowbooks.ie

Description: Libraries offer the possibility to search for a specific title and to perform an electronic reservation. Libraries also offer the possibility of joining book clubs, as well as a wide range of other services.

Research support

Responsibility: Irish Research Council

Website: http://www.research.ie/

Description: The mission of the Irish Research Council is to enable and sustain a vibrant research community in Ireland. To address the broad skills and research needs within society, excellent researchers are supported in all disciplines from Arts to Zoology.

6. Family

Children, couples

Child allowances

Responsibility: Central Government, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection

Website: http://www.welfare.ie/

Description: Online application for Child Benefit payments for a first child. Payment automatically increases upon registration of the birth of subsequent children.

Certificates (birth, marriage): request and delivery

Responsibility: Central Government, Department of Health and Children, General Register Office

Website: www.certificates.ie

Description: Electronic form to apply for a life event certificate.

7. Consumers

Shopping (your rights), unfair treatment

Citizens Information website

Responsibility: Citizens Information Board (national agency)

Website: http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/

Description: Citizens Information website is run by the Citizens Information Board, Ireland's national agency responsible for providing information and advice on social services, operating under the aegis of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. The website provides guidance on a wide range of subjects, such as employment rights, buying a home, moving abroad and education.

eGovernment Services for Businesses

Availability and sophistication of eServices for Businesses

The information in this section presents an overview of the basic public services, which were identified by the European Commission and Member States under the Your Europe initiative that is an EU site designed to help citizens do things in other European countries – avoiding unnecessary inconvenience and red tape in regard to doing business abroad.

The groups of services for businesses are as follows:

1. **Start and grow**
2. **VAT and customs**
3. **Selling abroad**
4. **Staff**
5. **Product requirements**
6. **Finance and funding**
7. **Public contracts**
8. **Environment**

1. Start and grow

Start-ups, European Company

Local Enterprise

Responsibility: Local Enterprise Office

Website: https://www.localenterprise.ie/

Description: This online guide is to help Irish start-ups and small businesses navigate the range of Government supports to see which could possibly apply. Local Enterprise Office provides advice, information and support to starting up or growing a business.

Registration of a new company

Responsibility: Central Government, Companies Registration Office

Website: http://www.cro.ie/

Description: If a business is being established using the entrepreneur's true name, there is no requirement for the business name to be formally registered. If a business is to be carried out under a name other than the entrepreneur's true name, registration of the business name is obligatory and can be registered online. If formal registration is required, it is not possible to fully register a company electronically, under Irish law, as a statutory declaration cannot be made electronically. However, the Companies Registration process in Ireland is quick and efficient.

Starting a business

Responsibility: Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation

Website: http://www.businessregulation.ie/

Description: The purpose of the platform is to provide start-up advice to businesses as well as details of key relevant regulations (financial and structural, location-based, Health & Safety, etc.)

Licence Applications

Responsibility: Department of Jobs Enterprise and Innovation

Website: https://www.licences.ie/ILAS

Description: The online licensing system allows businesses to apply and pay for the licences, permits and certificates that they need.

Intellectual property rights

eRegister of industrial property applications

Responsibility: Irish Patents Office

Website: https://www.patentsoffice.ie/en/

Description: Information about IP in Ireland, and two online services are available. These two services are the following: online payments (for renewal fees, trade mark registration fee(s) and patent grant fee(s) by credit, or debit card), and trade mark e-filling (for trade mark).

Annual accounts

Submission of data to statistical offices

Responsibility: Central Government, Central Statistics Office (CSO)

Website: http://www.cso.ie/

Description: Submission of data to the statistical office can be performed electronically.

2. VAT and customs

VAT – Basic rules, Cross-border VAT, Check a VAT number (VIES), VAT refunds

Revenue Online Service (ROS) (incl. electronic payments)

Responsibility: Central Government, Revenue Commissioners

Website: https://www.revenue.ie/

Description: Revenue Online Service (ROS) is provided for business customers by the Revenue Commissioners. This system provides a means for business customers to: file returns online; make payments by debit card, debit instruction or online banking (Online Banking applies to Income Tax only); obtain online details of personal/client Revenue Accounts; calculate tax liability; conduct business electronically and claim repayments. The ROS service is based on qualified electronic signatures.

VAT: declaration, notification

Responsibility: Central Government, Revenue Commissioners

Website: https://www.revenue.ie/

Description: The system allows submission and payment facilities for all VAT returns by all traders or their nominated tax agent. In addition to the standard VAT return, the System supports submission of - Annual Return of Trading Details (RTD Form) and statistical returns - Intrastat and VIES as required. The portal also allows taxpayers to verify their tax clearance by simply supplying the Tax Clearance Access Numbers and Tax Reference Numbers to a relevant third party.

Excise duties

Corporate tax: declaration, notification

Responsibility: Central Government, Revenue Commissioners

Website: https://www.revenue.ie/

Description: The system allows submission and payment facilities for Corporation Tax returns by companies or their nominated tax agent. Companies filing electronically receive an electronic copy of the Notice of Assessment. The system can accept returns information generated from third party software, as well as Revenue supplied forms.

Customs declaration

Responsibility: Central Government, Revenue Commissioners

Website: https://www.revenue.ie/

Description: Online facilities for carrying out customs declarations are available in Ireland via the Revenue On-Line Service (ROS).

Reporting imports/exports

Importing and Exporting

Responsibility: Irish Tax and Customs

Website: https://www.revenue.ie/

Description: Several documents required in relation to imports and exports can be accessed via the website of the Irish Tax and Customs.

3. Selling abroad

Providing services abroad, distance selling, importing/exporting rules

Export (Information and advice)

Responsibility: Enterprise Ireland

Website: http://www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/Export-Assistance/

Description: Enterprise Ireland is a state agency responsible for supporting the development of manufacturing and internationally traded services companies. The website has a dedicated section committed to facilitation of the development of a strong exporting sector by offering flexible solutions to client needs.

Competition rules, unfair contract terms, consumer guarantees, defective products

Irish law - Legal information systems

Responsibility: Irish Statute Book

Website: http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/

Description: Several websites provide Irish legislation in an electronic form. The electronic Irish Statute Book (eISB) includes Acts of the Oireachtas and Statutory Instruments, the official versions of which remain the printed versions published by Government Publications. The eISB also includes the Legislation Directory. Other sources of Irish information are for example the Irish Legal Information Initiative, or Irish Law Site.

4. Staff

Terms of employment, social security, equal treatment, redundancies

Social contributions for employees

Responsibility: Central Government, Revenue Commissioners, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection

Website: https://www.revenue.ie/, www.welfare.ie

Description: The system allows payment of social contribution (PRSI) and payroll tax (PAYE) by employers, on a monthly/quarterly basis, as required. It also allows for submission of the annual return of employees PAYE and PRSI information. The system is fully compatible with and supports the submission of returns generated from third party software as well as from Revenue supplied forms.

Workplace Relations

Responsibility: Central Government, Workplace Relations Commission

Website: https://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/; http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/enforcement_and_redress/national_employment_rights_authority.html

Description: The Workplace Relations Commission has responsibility for information provision, workplace advice, mediation, conciliation, adjudication, inspection and enforcement in relation to employment rights, equality and equal status matters and industrial relations.
The Labour Court, in addition to providing an appeals mechanism against Adjudication Officer decisions and determinations, establishes Joint Labour Committees, registers Joint Industrial Councils and investigates Trade Disputes affecting the public interest.

5. Product requirements

CE marking, mutual recognition, standardisation in Europe, classification, labelling, packaging

National Standards

Responsibility: National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI)

Website: https://www.nsai.ie/

Description: Exhaustive information on the national standards is available on the website, yet no eService is available.

Chemicals (REACH)

Irish REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals, EU Regulation no 1907/2006) Information point(s)

Responsibility: Health and Safety Authority

Website: http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Chemicals/REACH/

Description: Useful information materials and the text of the national enforcement legislation are available on the website.

6. Finance and funding

Access to funding, EU funding programmes

Enterprise Ireland

Responsibility: Enterprise Ireland

Website: http://www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/funding-supports/

Description: Enterprise Ireland is a state agency responsible for supporting the development of manufacturing and internationally traded services companies. The website provides detailed information on the process of provision of funding and supports to the companies of different size - from entrepreneurs with business propositions for a high potential start-up through to large companies expanding their activities, improving efficiency and growing international sales.

7. Public contracts

Rules and procedures, tools and databases, reporting irregularities

Public procurement / eProcurement

Responsibility: Central Government, Office of Government Procurement

Website: http://www.etenders.gov.ie/; https://www.procurement.ie/

Description: eTenders is the central government procurement portal. It provides information and tools for electronic public procurement. Online tendering tools are provided for public sector purchasers including: online creation of notices with approved eSender status; attachment of tender documents for downloading by suppliers; online clarifications between buyers and suppliers; online submission of tenders by suppliers; site forums for the different sectors involved in public procurement; and comprehensive guidance material. For suppliers there are free email alerts when tenders of interest to them have been advertised, as well as management of their notices and tenders. An online pre-qualification questionnaire facility has also been rolled out.

8. Environment

EMAS certification, energy labels, eco-design, EU eco-label

Environment-related permits (incl. reporting)

Responsibility: Central Government, Environmental Protection Agency

Website: http://www.epa.ie/

Description: Online submission of requests for environment-related permits. The EPA provides customised and segmented information on environmental-related regulation and obligations, regarding both the AER/PRTR and for IPCC, Waste and Waste Water Discharge applications. Applicants can also request a determination as to whether an activity requires a waste licence, waste facility permit, certificate of registration, or none of these at http://www.epa.ie/licensing/licques/article11declarations/.

European Commission

The factsheets present an overview of the state and progress of eGovernment in European countries.

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NIFO provides information on interoperability activities in Europe and is in charge of eGovernment factsheets' annual updates.

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